

- 2.8** The number of full-time faculty members is adequate to support the mission of the institution and to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs.
(Faculty)
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Off-Site Committee Comments

Troy University's mission statement emphasizes the diversity of its programs offered in various formats to a diverse student body. The university intends to offer programs which lead students to "discovery and exploration of knowledge" as that knowledge applies to "life-long success." Based on the university's data, it serves its students with 483 full-time faculty members and 1119 part-time. The full-time faculty teach 47% of the total credit hours taught in the university, the preponderance of these on the Dothan campus. Many of the institution's other sites are served by large numbers of part-time faculty. At least one such program has no full-time faculty at all listed in its roster. At several other sites, full-time people account for as little as 30% of the listed faculty.

Full time faculty should be in sufficient numbers to maintain program quality and program integrity. Part-time faculty are doubtless dedicated teachers, but university's educational mission extends well beyond the classroom instruction to include advising, mentoring, working in partnership with students on research projects. Part-time faculty, who may have to work under the demands of other employment, may find their time to be limited for such student interaction, their insight into university practice and policies and their bond to the institution limited by the difficulties inherent in part-time teaching.

These limitations may offer special problems for part-time and non-traditional students when, as in the case of Troy University, many of those students are themselves laboring under an added burden of outside jobs or family obligations. The committee believes that the small number of full-time faculty may compromise the quality and integrity of the university's programs and its commitment to its mission.

NARRATIVE

Troy University is committed in mission and deed to providing a dedicated faculty that promotes discovery and exploration of knowledge and its application to life-long success through effective teaching, service, creative partnerships, scholarship and research. This response will demonstrate the adequacy of the number of full-time faculty members by showing full-time faculty engagement in all aspects of curricular development, program planning, assessment, delivery and program review. These full-time faculty activities ensure the quality and integrity of academic programs. In addition to a more detailed discussion of the role of full-time faculty members at Troy University and the University's belief that the number of these faculty members are adequate to meet its institutional mission, evidence is provided below to show how part-time faculty members contribute effectively in serving adult students as teacher-practitioners in roles well aligned with the full-time faculty. Finally, strong student satisfaction ratings are provided to support the University's belief that it is achieving its mission with the present number of full-time faculty.

I. Adequacy of the number of full-time faculty to ensure the quality and integrity of its academic programs

Full-time faculty, as defined in the Faculty Handbook, p. 32, are engaged in all aspects of curriculum development and assessment review and maintain control over all aspects of the institution's academic programs. Troy University fulfills its mission with 483 full-time faculty who teach almost half (47%) of the total credit hours offered at the University. It should be noted Troy University delivers its programs with virtually no reliance on graduate teaching assistants, offering Troy University students learning opportunities delivered by individuals who are accomplished teacher-scholar-practitioners.

Full-time faculty members control and direct the statement of purpose for all academic programs, the establishment of the student learning outcomes for all academic programs, the assessment of student performance in all academic programs, and all decisions regarding course curricula that support all academic programs. Committees made up of full-time faculty control all decisions relative to course syllabi and textbooks in the academic programs. Full-time faculty members also comprise the committees that make recommendations regarding faculty tenure and promotion. Specifically, curriculum control is vested in the following faculty committees:

- Undergraduate Academic Council
- Graduate Council,
- Curriculum and discipline committees in the five colleges (College of Arts and Sciences, Sorrell College of Business, College of Communication and Fine Arts, College of Education, College of Health and Human Services),
- Institutional Effectiveness Committee,
- College-level tenure and promotion review committees (College of Arts and Sciences, Sorrell College of Business, College of Communication and Fine Arts, College of Education, College of Health and Human Services) and the
- University-level tenure and promotion review committee.

A graphic representation of full-time faculty members' control of the academic curriculum is provided and summarized as follows:

1. The academic and world environments (job market shifts, regional needs including those identified at University sites and campuses, societal changes, etc.) stimulate changes to the curriculum.
2. Faculty members, working in discipline and curriculum committees in the College of Arts and Sciences, Sorrell College of Business, College of Communication and Fine Arts, College of Education, and College of Health and Human Services initiate plans for changes to the curriculum. These committees report progress and recommendations through an organizational review process in each college that concludes with the approval of the college dean.
3. Conceptual approval is granted by the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost and by the Chancellor in the early stages of curricular development. This ensures that both the

- Chancellor and the Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost, as chief academic officer, are aware of possible changes and the potential need for additional university resources.
4. Faculty-led college committees fully develop proposals, leading to internal reviews and recommendations by the Institutional Effectiveness Committee and the Undergraduate Academic Council or Graduate Academic Council.
 5. Academic leadership (Executive Vice Chancellor/Provost and Chancellor) provides final approval. Depending on the nature of the curricular change, approval may be sought from SACS, the Alabama Commission on Higher Education, or specialized accrediting agencies.
 6. The implemented curricular changes become part of the University's on-going assessment through its prescribed procedures of monitoring student learning outcomes and addressing plans for improvement based on an assessment of those outcomes.

Full-time faculty members clearly direct all decisions related to academic programs from planning through assessment. Full-time faculty members are located across Troy University's various campuses and sites as well as eCampus. College deans are responsible for maintaining an appropriate balance of full-time and part-time faculty in order to ensure the quality and integrity of their academic programs.

Specialized accreditation reviews conducted in 2008 by the National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education and National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission have all examined discipline-specific academic programs, including the number of full-time faculty in these various programs, and have made no recommendations regarding the inadequacy of full-time faculty or lack of full-time faculty oversight of programs.

The off-site team indicated that its review of the University's data indicated that Troy University served its students during fall semester 2007 with 483 full-time and 1,119 part-time faculty members. A closer examination of the 1,119 part-time faculty members suggests that these numbers are comprised of distinctive subgroups (e.g. not all part-time faculty are the same). Of the 1,119 part-time faculty members, for example, approximately 130 are full-time professional staff members who are certified to teach in their areas of expertise. These individuals include deans, associate deans, program directors, and other officials of the University. These professional staff clearly have strong, and recurrent, ties to the University, its mission and its efforts at promoting student learning.

The remaining 919 part-time faculty members are individuals who may be relatively new to the University as well as those who have taught for the University for a number of years. Thirty percent of the faculty (those teaching full-time) is delivering 47% of the total credit hours offered at the University. Many part-time faculty members teach courses with lower enrollments, especially in eCampus offerings. As a result, the perception of the significance of the number of part-time faculty can appear inflated.

In addition to delivering instruction, all academic programs are governed through the guidance of full-time faculty. Both internal and external data suggest that Troy University's combination of full-time and part-time faculty more than meet the academic needs of its students, including the delivery of curriculum and support provided through academic advising. Additionally, Troy University's unique structure of multiple campuses and sites allows full-time faculty members to deliver programmatic content at multiple locations. The traditional concept of specific faculty designations, at specific locations (as noted by the off-site review team in its discussion of the Dothan campus, for example) is less applicable at an institution such as Troy University which offers its students a variety of venues for course delivery, including on-line. The faculty members who deliver courses across these multiple venues may be housed principally at one location but teach at one or more other Troy University locations. This idea of a flexible faculty is especially true when considering the University's eCampus offerings. Many of the University's full-time faculty members also deliver courses in eCampus.

In the fall of 2008, for example, more than half of the faculty members delivering courses on the University's four Alabama campuses were full-time faculty. The greatest percentage of traditional student learners is on these four campuses, particularly the Troy campus. In the University's Global Campus and eCampus, where the overwhelming majority of the students are adult learners, approximately one-fourth of the faculty delivering courses were full-time.

In summary, the University has adequate full-time faculty who are actively involved in academic activities critical to the mission of the institution and the success of the students. Troy University has adequate numbers of full-time faculty members who ensure the quality and integrity of its academic mission.

II. Role of part-time faculty in accomplishing the University mission

In addition to meeting its institutional mission through an adequate number of full-time faculty members, Troy University also meets its mission through use of specialized part-time teacher-practitioners. Service to adult learners is an important part of Troy University's mission. In fact, 57% of Troy University's students are adult learners engaged in part-time study and as such, the requirements of Core Requirement 2.8 must be viewed from the perspective of an institution that is significantly committed to adult learners. Based upon scholarly research in the field of adult education, Troy University maintains that its part-time faculty members, consisting of teacher-practitioners whose roles in the University are well aligned with the full-time faculty, are highly capable of establishing the peer-to-peer relationships vital to teaching adult learners. Troy University further believes that part-

time faculty, due to their robust real-world experiences, are highly desirable mentors for adult learners.

Professor Mark Tennant, in his chapter “The Psychology of Adult Teaching and Learning” published in the book *Adult Education* (Peters, J.M., & Jarvis, P. Eds) noted in 1991 that when students are adults, the “teachers and learners are adult peers.” (p. 201) Dr. Lee Bash, in the 2003 book *Adult Learners in the Academy*, examined the role of faculty in teaching adult learners in the college setting. Bash cited a research study by D. D. Billington in 1996 that noted a key factor to successful college education for adult students is “an environment where faculty treats adult students as peers – accepted and respected as intelligent, experienced adults whose opinions are listened to, honored, appreciated.” (p. 159) Along with other faculty members, teacher-practitioners are well suited to create this environment.

In addition, there is no evidence that the ability to challenge adult learners to critically reflect on disciplinary theory and practice is limited only to full-time faculty. Troy University’s expectations of delivery of academic content by both full-time and part-time faculty are the same. For example, both full-time and part-time faculty use common textbooks, common syllabi, common learning outcomes and are evaluated through common assessment measures. At many universities, the key distinction between full-time and part-time faculty is often the expectations of the level of scholarship and university-wide service. At Troy University, the expectations for teaching and mentoring suggest no significant differences between its full-time and part-time faculty. Part-time faculty must meet the same standards of academic credentials to be certified to teach. Part-time faculty members contribute to Troy University’s continued achievement in meeting the academic needs of its students and fulfilling its mission as an institution.

Troy University finds that the notion that only full-time faculty members are capable of serving as effective mentors is conjecture that falls short of scholarly evidence. The best research available, by Doloz, Tennant, and Bash, suggests the opposite – that the key to effective teaching and mentoring is the establishment of a trusting peer-to-peer relationship in which the adult learner has established rapport with the mentor. Troy University sees the part-time faculty member, with part of his or her time committed to teaching and part committed to a professional career, can be ideally suited to serve as a mentor to working adult students who value the knowledge that the part-time faculty member brings through academic credentials and extensive application of knowledge in the real-world setting.

In summary, Troy University believes that a critical element in how the institution meets its mission is through the use of teacher-practitioners who serve as peer mentors and advisers as well as faculty for the University's adult learning population.

III. Long-term relationships with many part-time faculty members: Bond to the University and meeting the University mission

Troy University employs part-time faculty in the execution and accomplishment of its mission. The success of the employment of individual part-time faculty members is tracked through end-of-course surveys administered each semester or term. Faculty members who do not maintain high academic standards within their courses or who have received validated student complaints and low evaluations are not employed in the future. Part-time faculty members who are academically well grounded and who are leaders within their professions become valued members of the faculty and participate in faculty meetings, University conferences and shared faculty research.

IV. Student satisfaction with academic programs and faculty across the University *Internal Assessment*

Troy University conducts a graduating student survey each year. This survey enables the University to carefully monitor key stakeholder satisfaction on issues critical to the institution's academic mission. These data are routinely disaggregated for comparative purposes to ensure, among other things, that resources are adequately directed toward meeting student needs and accomplishing the mission of the institution. The following table provides data from the 2006 – 2007 and 2007 – 2008 surveys showing clear evidence that the University has sufficient faculty resources to accomplish its mission, based on consistent student satisfaction.

2.8 Table 1: Graduating Student Survey: 2006-07 and 2007-08		
Survey Question	Percent <i>Excellent or Good</i>	
	2006-07	2007-08
Overall quality of academic program	88%	86%
Instruction in major courses	85%	83%
Learning critical thinking skills	91%	90%
Learning problem solving skills	88%	88%
Learning research skills	87%	88%
My academic program was intellectually challenging and stimulating	85%	85%

The use of highly experienced part-time faculty members does not detract from Troy University's ability to accomplish its mission, or from the quality of mentoring or teach-

ing. Evidence from the 2007 – 2008 survey is routinely disaggregated to provide comparisons of student perceptions of the institution’s performance. These results suggest part-time faculty do not hinder the University in the achievement of its mission.

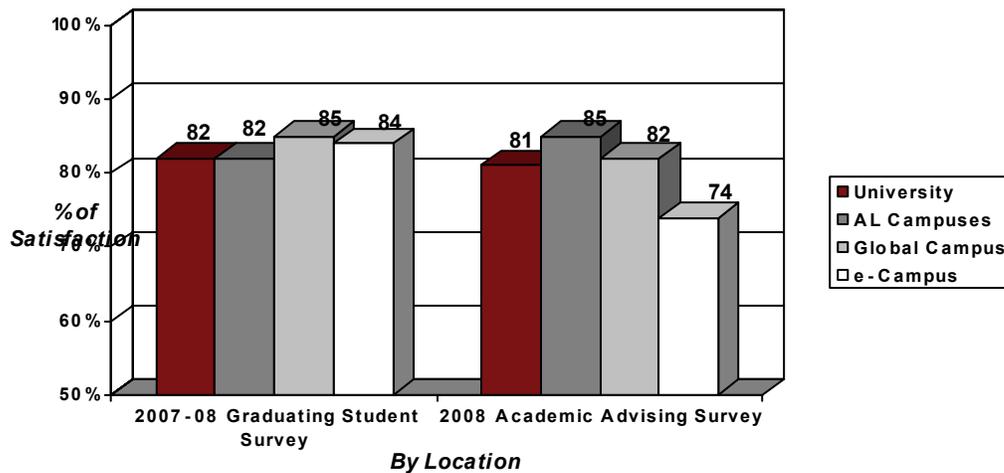
The following table compares perceptions of students at the residential campus in Troy, Ala. (which uses more full-time faculty) with eCampus students and Global Campus students, both of which typically use more part-time faculty. The table is based on questions that were answered using a 5 point Likert-type scale, where 5 is excellent.

2.8 Table 2: 2007-08 Graduating Student Survey By Campus

	Troy Campus	eCampus	Global Campuses
Number of students	(N=290)	(N=333)	N-396)
Quality of instruction in major courses	4.11	4.22	4.08
Quality of instruction in general education courses	3.81	4.16	4.05
Communication between faculty and students	4.00	4.13	4.02
Faculty accessibility	3.86	3.94	3.85
<i>5 is "excellent"</i>			

Additionally, internal comparative data regarding student satisfaction with academic advising clearly demonstrates that the use of adjuncts does not detract from the quality of the academic advising for students and does not compromise the University’s ability to accomplish its mission. A summary of two student satisfaction surveys is compiled in Table 3 (Sources: 2007-08 Graduating Student Survey, 2008 Advising Survey). The table provides a comparison of student opinions regarding their level of satisfaction with academic advising by campus or where they are taking courses. The results of both student surveys indicate that students perceive academic advising as “adequate,” “good” or “excellent” in meeting their advising needs.

2.8 Table 3: Satisfaction levels regarding academic advising from two student surveys reported by location



External Assessment

External comparative data tells a similar story.

The National Survey of Student Engagement (NSSE) provides comparative data on student stakeholder perceptions on a wide range of issues, including students’ evaluation of their entire educational experience at an institution. Data from the 2007 NSSE survey (Troy University N=494) includes students from across Troy University. Eighty-six percent of Troy University seniors considered their educational experience at Troy University to be good or excellent, compared to 85% of seniors responding nationally. Data from the 2007 NSSE survey also included comparative data related to advising. Seventy-six percent of Troy University seniors rated the quality of academic advising at Troy University to be good or excellent, compared to 68% of the seniors in the national survey.

Troy University provides clear evidence based on internal and external data that the institution not only performs as well as other institutions that typically may have a higher percentage of full-time faculty members, but in some areas, such as advising, actually performs better.

Summary

Troy University believes that the number of its full-time faculty members, their involvement in all aspects of academic programming and academic quality, and their blending with the institution’s use of part-time faculty members enables the University to meet its institutional mission. Further, Troy University believes that the number of its full-time faculty members and the central roles in which they are engaged for the institution does not hinder student learning, mentoring or advising. The University is sensitive to the need for a large

and involved group of full-time faculty, and based on such awareness, the institution employs almost 500 full-time faculty members. In addition to this cadre of full-time faculty members, the University regularly engages the services of long-standing, part-time faculty members, including full-time professional staff members who have been certified to deliver courses in their respective areas of expertise. The University's regular review of positive internal and external assessment data, as well as current scholarship in the field of higher education related to non-traditional students, confirms that the number of full-time faculty at the institution is adequate and appropriate for the multi-campus, multi-delivery method mission of the institution. Therefore, the number of full-time faculty members is believed to be adequate to support the mission of Troy University and ensures the quality and integrity of its academic programs. Troy University respectfully finds that it is in compliance with this core requirement.

2.8 Supporting Documentation Available Online	Location
2008 Academic Advising Survey Report	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/fr02-08/2008_Academic_Advising_Survey_Report.pdf
Curriculum and Discipline Committee Memberships - College of Arts and Sciences	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/03-04-11/A-S-Academic-Discipline-Committees.pdf
Curriculum and Discipline Committee Memberships - College of Communication and Fine Arts	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/03-04-11/CCFA_Curriculum-Committee.pdf
Curriculum and Discipline Committee Memberships - College of Education	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/03-04-11/COE-CURRICULUM-COMMITTEES_facilitators.pdf
Curriculum and Discipline Committee Memberships - College of Health and Human Services	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/03-04-11/CHHS-Curriculum-Committee-and-Discipline-Committee.pdf
Curriculum and Discipline Committee Memberships - Sorrell College of Business	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/03-04-11/SCOB-Committees_AY07-08.pdf
Faculty Handbook, 2008 Edition	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/Faculty-Handbook-2008-Edition.pdf
Graduate Council	http://stars.troy.edu/troy_website/gac.html
Graduating Student Survey Report 2007-2008	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/fr02-08/Troy_University_2007-2008_Graduating-Student-Survey-Report.pdf
Graphic Representation of Full-Time Faculty Members' Control of the Academic Curriculum	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/fr-02-08/graphic-academic_change.pdf
Institutional Effectiveness Committee	http://stars.troy.edu/troy_website/iec.html
National Council for Accreditation of Teacher Education	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/fr02-08/NCATE-board-of-ed.pdf
National League for Nursing Accrediting Commission	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/fr02-08/NLNAC.pdf
Promotion and Tenure Criteria	http://sacs.troy.edu/reference/03-03-01/college-criteria_scholarship/
Undergraduate Academic Council	http://stars.troy.edu/troy_website/uac.html
University Review Committee	http://stars.troy.edu/troy_website/urc.html

